

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 293195 TOSEC 310401

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EXDIS/FOR UNDER SECRETARY ROGERS ONLY FROM FRANK

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1

TAGS: SZ, EGEN

SUBJECT: GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS

REFTELS: A. GENEVA 9552; B. GENEVA 9566;

1. I HAVE READ WITH GREAT INTEREST AND CONCERN ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA AS THEY SEEM TO BE REACHING A CRUCIAL STAGE. I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A FEW MORE GRATUITOUS THOUGHTS.

2. I BELIEVE THAT MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE PUT ON A MORE REASONABLE FRONT WITH THE BRITISH AND US BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO POWER BASE, NO GUERILLA SUPPORT, AND LACK THE SUPPORT OF THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS. AS ATTRACTIVE AS THEY MIGHT SEEM IN THE GENEVA CONTEXT, WE OUGHT NOT TO FORGET THAT OUR OPINION WAS NOT SO HIGH OF EITHER BEFORE GENEVA GOT STARTED.

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3. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT

OUTLINED BY CHONA TO WISNER IN REFTTEL A HAS MANY REASON-
ABLE ELEMENTS, FOR EXAMPLE:

-- PROTECTION OF WHITE RIGHTS THROUGH BRITISH CONTROL AND
APPOINTMENT OF WHITE RHODESIANS TO KEY MINISTRIES;
-- FIVE MINISTERS FOR ALL OF THE NATIONALISTS, A FAR
BETTER DEAL FOR SITHOLE THAN HE HAD ANY RIGHT TO EXPECT.

4. THE MAIN PROBLEM WE MAY HAVE WITH THE PROPOSAL IS A
LACK OF A COUNCIL OF STATE, A BODY THAT WE HAD ENVISIONED
HAVING LITTLE REAL INFLUENCE ANYWAY. THE OPTICS OF THE
PROPOSAL MAY BE HARD FOR SMITH TO SWALLOW, BUT I DON'T
THINK WE SHOULD FAIL TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL OUT OF HAND.
IT COULD BE MODIFIED SOMEWHAT, SAY BY FORMING A PRIVY
COUNCIL OF AN EQUAL NUMBER OF BLACKS AND WHITES THAT
WOULD ADVISE THE BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AS A SUB-
STITUTE FOR THE OLD IDEA OF A COUNCIL OF STATE.

5. I UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO TAKE A TOUGH POSITION IN OUR
TALKS WITH THE NATIONALISTS IN GENEVA FOR NEGOTIATING
REASONS, BUT I THINK THE TALKING POINTS IN REFTTEL B FOR
REINHARDT'S USE WITH CHONA ARE FAR TOO NEGATIVE. THEY
MAY ONLY HELP DELAY THE INEVITABLE AND I THINK OUR PRI-
MARY GOAL FOR GENEVA SHOULD BE THE QUICK ESTABLISHMENT OF
AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. LET US ALSO NOT OVERESTIMATE
SMITH'S REAL STRENGTH BOTH AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND
AT HOME. REPORTS I HAVE HEARD FROM ACQUAINTANCES VISITING
RHODESIA ARE THAT THE WHITE POPULATION WANTS A QUICK END
TO THE GENEVA TALKS AND A SHORT TRANSITION PERIOD. THEY
ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT MAJORITY RULE. THEY ARE WORRIED
THAT THE WRANGLING IN GENEVA MAY LEAD TO AN ESCALATION OF
VIOLENCE. ROBINSON

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